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NEWS RELEASE

November 1, 2016

Thirty-five-year-old Thomas Leonard Lusk, II, pled guilty today to two violent sex offenses: assault with intent to commit rape or forced oral copulation of one woman and forced oral copulation involving a second woman. The defendant also admitted to a prior conviction for a serious felony under California's Three-Strikes law. On November 8, 2016 the defendant will be sentenced to prison for 18 years and 8 months, which is the maximum sentence for the crimes he admitted.

In September 2014 the defendant lured a 28-year-old victim inside his isolated residence near Miranda. When the victim immediately realized she was in danger and tried to leave, the defendant forced her to remain and struck her in the head. While she was disoriented and possibly unconscious he took her purse, car keys and cellphone. The defendant demanded sexual acts. The victim devised a way to escape by suggesting the defendant let her go to her car to retrieve drugs. He took her outside with him to the driveway where her car was parked. The victim then fled on foot until she reached a citizen coming to a stop at a nearby Highway 101 off-ramp. The citizen called 911 and assisted in getting her to safety.

In March 2015, a 25-year-old victim went to the defendant's home looking for his father. While she was in the bathroom, the defendant went in and began beating her in the head with closed fists while telling her that she was going to stay with him. After forcing the victim to orally copulate him, the defendant went to the bathroom and the victim escaped out a back door. She fled wearing only undergarments and could hear him calling her. In fear of pursuit by the

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defendant, the victim hid on a neighbor's porch approximately a quarter of a mile from his home, where she was later found and assisted by neighbors.

The investigation by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office with assistance from the California Department of Justice also revealed that Lusk had tortured and sexually assaulted a third woman while holding her captive for 4 days in July 2015. Charges related to this incident were dismissed as part of the plea agreement out of concern for the well-being of the victim. The extreme physical and emotional trauma inflicted by Lusk prevented her from voluntarily testifying against him.

Deputy District Attorney Stacey Eads prosecuted the case with the assistance of District Attorney Investigator Kyla Baxley. District Attorney Maggie Fleming wishes to express her respect and appreciation for the strength and courage of all the survivors of the defendant's despicable behavior.